



REVIEWS

BOOKS

Reviewed by Ruth Parnell

IN DEFENCE OF ASTROLOGY: Learn to Answer the Critics of Astrology by Robert Parry

Quantum/Foulsham, UK, 2005
ISBN 0-572-03059-2 (224pp tpb)

Availability: <http://www.foulsham.com>

A link with the starry firmament above has been encoded in our genes and psyches since mankind's earliest days, so most people—whether they admit it or not—will have some intuitive appreciation for the value of astrology, claims Robert Parry. He reminds us that before the so-called Age of Enlightenment, astrology and astronomy were inextricably linked, the latter being the more mathematical aspect of the discipline.

Astrology may be an inexact science, but there's a great deal of evidence to confirm that it's a valuable tool in helping us understand ourselves and our world. Research such as that by French statistician Michel Gauquelin and British astronomer Percy Seymour has confirmed that there are statistical and magnetic correlations behind certain planetary and zodiacal configurations.

Parry has produced a primer for those who want to understand and discuss the subject but also need the tools to head off the criticisms that are regularly levelled against astrology by those who have no real knowledge about it. There's a section on self-defence, which advises on how to deal with the bullying detractors through an understanding of the four personality types based on the elements of earth, water, air and fire. Parry has identified 12 types of criticism usually put up against astrology and has a

counter-argument to combat each one. These include controversies over the precession of the zodiac, the twins conundrum, heliocentricity, the fate of nations, the problem of new planets, the question of forced births, and more. There are brief counter-attacks as well as more detailed responses described by Parry, who provides a final pep-talk with reflections on the future direction of astrology. His book has the ammo to help you fend off the astro-cynics, whether at the office water cooler or the dinner party.

TWILIGHT IN THE DESERT: The Coming Saudi Oil Shock and the World Economy

by Matthew R. Simmons
John Wiley & Sons, USA, 2005
ISBN 0-471-73876-X (422pp hc)

Availability: <http://www.wiley.com/>

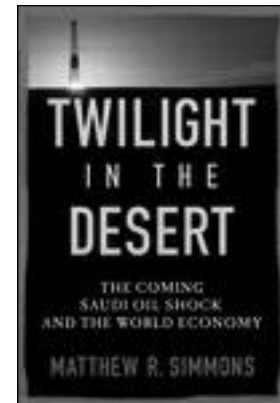
Houston-based energy investment banker Matthew Simmons takes a realistic look at the future of Saudi Arabian oil supplies in his timely analysis, *Twilight in the Desert*.

His main problem in researching this book was finding exact data on oil production in the kingdom, released by the government or its giant industrial arm Saudi Aramco. Simmons had to sift through 200 papers written by members of the Society of Petroleum Engineers to piece together the bigger picture to add to his knowledge gleaned from over 30 years in the field. He says that just because Saudi Arabia has been a reliable, cheap supplier of oil to the world up till now, this doesn't mean that the kingdom will be able to continue fuelling a demand that's keeps on growing—and from oilwells that are declining in productivity and a landscape that's unlikely to yield any new reserves of significant size.

Considering that even Saudi Arabia's super-giant oilfields are fast approaching their peak production, Simmons thinks there's scant hope that the kingdom will be able to boost its oil output from an average 6.5 to 7.5 million barrels to 10, 12 or even 15 million barrels of oil a day for the next 10 or 20 years, let alone the 50 years that its PR arm announced last year.

The largest oilfields are already showing signs of ageing, and, like other super-giants elsewhere in the world that have gone into decline, the Saudi fields will not be spared from the ravages of exploitation. That will have enormous social and economic impacts worldwide, says Simmons, and this is a probability that governments and industries need to plan for *now*. That means being much more serious about getting alternative, non-polluting energy sources in place to help with the transition to an oil-poor world.

Simmons's background details, arguments and analyses are thought-provoking if not disturbing. Politicians, industrialists and economists should consider his warnings.



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TWENTY THIRST CENTURY

by John Archer

Pure Water Press, Australia, 2005

ISBN 1-920769-56-09 (319pp tpb)

Availability: **Australia**—Pure Water Press,
<http://www.johnarcher.com.au>

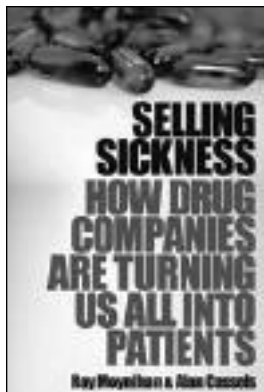
Author John Archer is passionate about water and has been researching and writing about it for 15 years. His new book *Twenty-Thirst Century* is an urgent call to action that furthers the cause he championed in his 2001 *Australia's Drinking Water: The Coming Crisis* (see NEXUS 8/06). It's urgent because the water supplies of the driest continent on Earth are drying up.

Cities and towns are suffering from the worst drought in 100 years, and climate change is making things worse, ensuring that when rain does fall it falls mainly on coastal strips and not within catchments. Archer focuses much of his gaze on Sydney's catchment because "within two short years Sydney could be the world's first modern metropolis to run out of water".

Part of the problem is that politicians, scientists and planners have allowed the crisis to unfold as it has—and their stop-gap solutions are doomed to failure. Archer explains why such solutions like seawater desalination (as being touted by the NSW State Government, and using nuclear power to do it), sewage recycling and groundwater extraction won't be economically viable and environmentally sustainable and they won't supply the quantity or quality of water to meet growing demand. He is also aghast that water authorities have such pathetic contingency plans should water supplies dry up or be severely compromised by, say, outbreaks of poisonous blue-green algae.

What Archer proposes is a sensible, sus-

tainable water management approach that includes incentives for householders to install water tanks and be responsible for their water supply. His strategy includes ways to become self-sufficient in water use by recycling grey water for gardening, and his advice covers the range of water filters and resources that are available. It's a blueprint for personal, community and planetary survival that's political as well as practical.



SELLING SICKNESS

by Ray Moynihan & Alan Cassels

Allen & Unwin, Australia, 2005

ISBN 1-74114-579-1 (264pp tpb)

Availability: www.allenandunwin.com

In their relentless drive to increase their market shares and profits, the pharmaceutical corporations are increasingly targeting the "worried well", defining new disease conditions and coming up with new drugs, or old drugs in a new guise, to treat them. But the tactics of the medical/pharmaceutical industry are revealed for all to see in *Selling Sickness*, a damning exposé by two

health writers, Ray Moynihan (whose work has appeared in major Australian newspapers and the world's top medical journals) and Alan Cassels (a Canadian researcher specialising in drug policy issues).

The common factor about the pharmcos' promotional strategies in selling us sickness is the marketing of fear. For example, the fear of heart attacks was used to sell women the idea that menopause requires HRT, and yet the drugs prescribed have been found to cause the very harm they are supposed to prevent. Moynihan and Cassels focus on a number of invented and/or misdiagnosed "disease conditions" including high cholesterol, depression, ADD, high blood pressure, pre-menstrual dysphoric disorder and social anxiety disorder to demonstrate how the pharmaceutical corporations have seriously duped the public. They use statistics in such a way as to blind doctors and potential patients to the actual efficacy of so many drugs, they give misleading or no information about harmful side-effects, and they sponsor patient support groups so as to kindle grassroots demand for their drugs. Too often they foster uncomfortably cosy relationships with medical practitioners for the sake of expanding their markets.

The authors, like the independent researchers and health advocates who are also trying to change the status quo, aim to stimulate informed public debate on health issues. They can already see a shift, with more and more professionals and laypeople demanding information that doesn't have pharmco money attached to it. They encourage us to realise that the more educated we are, the better equipped we are to participate in the debate and take more control over our own health and well-being.



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LOST STAR OF MYTH AND TIME by Walter Cruttenden

St Lynn's Press, Pittsburgh, USA, 2006
ISBN 0-9767631-1-7 (348pp tpb)
Availability: <http://www.stlynnspress.com>;
<http://www.loststarbook.com>

There's something in the solar system's movement through the heavens that cannot be explained by the so-called precessional cycles. Astute observers over time, from a fixed point on Earth, can notice the stars shift position by about four minutes per day due to the Earth's orbit around the Sun. But something else is exerting an effect on our region of space, and clues as to what it is can be found from relics and myths of many ancient civilisations.

Walter Cruttenden, an American amateur archaeo-astronomer, has researched this subject for decades and has come to a conclusion that is more of a rediscovery than an original finding. The stories of antiquity that describe repeating cycles of Golden and Dark ages may well be factually based: perhaps the result of alternating stellar forces that affect Earth as our solar system moves in a 24,000-year binary (dual star) orbit. It is this binary star, alluded to in the ancient writings, that is responsible for the perturbations in our orbit around galactic centre and for changes in ambient radiation levels.

The most likely candidate for a binary or companion star, Cruttenden suggests, is Sirius, and a striking piece of evidence for this came in 1989 when Sirius B passed in front of Sirius A (relative to the Earth, as it does every 50 years). The Earth's spin rate slowed down, losing a second per day for several weeks before the event, and then increased, gaining a second per day for several weeks after the event. Not only do

these findings imply that we might be in a binary or multiple star orbit with Sirius as our primary companion, they show there is an observable gravitational (or electromagnetic) relationship between our solar system and the Sirius system.

Taking in the ancient Indian yuga cycles, the 1980s Nemesis Star concept and conscious EM information field theory, this book is set to redefine our paradigms.

HAIR OF THE ALIEN

by Bill Chalker

Paraview/Pocket Books, 2005
ISBN 0-7434-9286-7 (341pp tpb)
Availability: Simon & Schuster

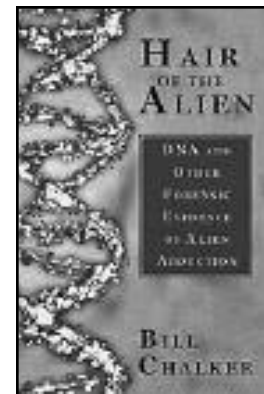
The alien abduction phenomenon is common all over the world, but there have been few instances where physical evidence was left behind that could be put under the microscope. The case of then 28-year-old Peter Khoury, a Sydney man who migrated from Lebanon in 1973, is an exception and is examined here by Sydney-based UFO researcher Bill Chalker, author of *The Oz Files: The Australian UFO Story* and an editor on *International UFO Reporter*.

The tangible evidence in the Khoury case was a couple of strands of hair left behind allegedly as a result of a bizarre experience in July 1992 when two alien women appeared on his bed. The plot thickened and eventually Bill Chalker organised for the hairs to be subjected to forensic DNA analysis, which took place during 1999 to 2001. The results were nothing short of staggering. They showed extraordinary biological anomalies suggestive of a hybrid donor and advanced biogenetic cloning techniques. (The research papers are reprinted in the appendix.) The blonde hair shaft contained

a rare Chinese/Mongolian mitochondrial DNA but the root contained a rare Basque-Gaelic DNA mix. Results like these should keep geneticists scratching their heads for years. Later in the book, Chalker speculates on what the findings may mean within the context of paranormal folklore and experiences among these racial groups.

To support the growing evidence that abductions are not the exclusive domain of little grey aliens, Chalker outlines a number of other cases such as Kelly Cahill's 1993 experience (involving independent witnesses) with red-eyed black ETs in Victoria, Australian Aboriginal sightings and South African shaman Credo Mutwa's accounts.

Chalker makes a strong case for a forensic approach in examining abduction and close encounter incidents, and looks at the work of such researchers as Dr Roger Leir who has made surgical removal of alien implants a speciality. He also praises Peter Khoury for his support group work in helping others come to terms with what usually are strange and frightening confrontations. A welcome addition to the abduction research literature.



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SHOCK TO THE SYSTEM

by Catherine O'Driscoll

Abbeywood Publishing, UK, 2005
ISBN 0-9523048-4-8 (217pp tpb)

Availability: Canine Health Concern,
<http://www.canine-health-concern.org.uk>

Catherine O'Driscoll, the co-founder over 12 years ago of Canine Health Concern (CHC), was shocked by the results of their survey on pet vaccinations. The questionnaire, prepared with the help of vet Dr Jean Dodds, homoeopathic vet Christopher Day and vaccine researcher Dr Viera Scheibner (see her article this issue), drew responses for some 3,800 dogs. CHC found that 66% of all illnesses reported occurred within the first three months after vaccination.

Moreover, 49% of all illnesses recorded started within 30 days, and 29% within seven days. The diseases included allergies, arthritis, cancer, encephalitis, heart conditions, rear-end paralysis and skin problems, and large numbers of the dogs contracted the very illnesses they'd been vaccinated against. O'Driscoll presented the findings in her 1998 book, *What Vets Don't Tell You About Vaccines*, and in *Shock...* she expands on further research conducted into pet vaccines, their side effects and the diseases they promote (see her article on pet vaccinations in this edition). She also reports on efforts to lobby the veterinary health authorities in the UK and USA to change their directives on annual boosters, which studies suggest provide no benefit and can be harmful.

O'Driscoll is a hardy campaigner for the right of pets to good health, and she advocates feeding pets natural, not processed, foods. This promotes natural immunity, which helps in combatting disease and preventing "shocks to the system" from vac-

cines and other veterinary pharmaceuticals. She devotes a chapter to understanding your pet's dietary requirements, as not all canines, for instance, can tolerate raw meaty bones. Included is a handy table of essential vitamins and minerals, their deficiency symptoms and their best food sources.

Ever the sensitive pet lover, O'Driscoll has a section on how our own stress can impact on the animals in our care. If we want to ensure our pets are healthy emotionally as well as physically, we also need to attend to our own stress levels. O'Driscoll provides some valuable tips in this eye-opening book.

THE MEN WHO STARE AT GOATS

by Jon Ronson

Picador/Pan Macmillan, UK, 2004, 2005
ISBN 0-330-37548-2 (278pp tpb, 2005)

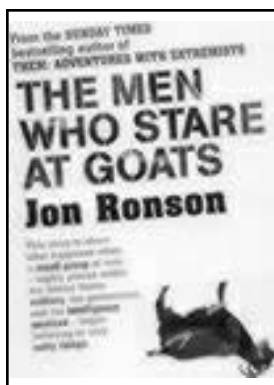
Availability: <http://www.picador.com>

It was probably a logical next step for Jon Ronson, author of *Them: Adventures with Extremists* (see 9/03), to write about the crazier shenanigans of US military intelligence. This he does in *The Men Who Stare At Goats*, which is also the title of a chapter

about the search for the Special Forces operative who supposedly stared a goat to death, and the secret enclave at Fort Bragg that was trying to duplicate his experiment with a herd of 100 debledated goats.

Some of the names Ronson meets up with are familiar to long-time NEXUS readers: Major-General Albert Stubblebine III, who kick-started attempts to get the military to take psychic spying seriously; Ed Dames, the "rogue" remote viewer who spilled the beans in 1995; and Colonel John Alexander, proponent of non-lethal weapons technology and developer of "sticky foam". Also included are retired Lt Colonel Jim Channon, who came up with the *First Earth Battalion Operations Manual* that advocated warrior monkdom and loudspeakers that emit "words of peace" on the battlefield, Dr Oliver Lowery, whose "Silent Subliminal Presentation System" was used to chilling effect on Iraqi troops in the first Gulf War, and the son of Frank Olson, guineapig in a CIA LSD mind-control experiment who "jumped" out of a New York hotel room in 1953. Ronson presents facts, ties up loose ends and asks questions in a conversational and often amusing way. He takes a wry perspective on his subjects and often empathises with them. But the tone gets scarier when Ronson shows how some of the more "out there" forms of warfare in their infancy a few decades ago are now being used to horrifying effect, one example being the PsyOps techniques used at Abu Ghraib jail.

If you want to know how we happened to get a War on Terror, and where it's heading, Ronson's investigations are revealing. He's turned his book into a TV series, *Crazy Rulers of the World*, which is a must-see as much as the book is a must-read.





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FROM LIGHT INTO DARKNESS: The Evolution of Religion in Ancient Egypt by Stephen S. Mehler

Adventures Unlimited Press, USA, 2005
ISBN 1-931882-49-5 (227pp tpb)
Availability: **Europe**—Frontier Publishing, <http://www.frontierpublishing.nl>; **USA**—AUP, <http://www.adventuresunlimited-press.com>; **Aust/NZ/UK**—NEXUS offices

The religions of dynastic Egypt had their roots in the spirituality of the prehistoric Khemitian cultures of North Africa, whose oral traditions spread into the Middle East and beyond with the tribal migrations that occurred long before the establishment of the Old Kingdom. Further, these migrations occurred as a result of a major natural catastrophe that took place around 11,500 years ago, according to author Stephen Mehler.

In *From Light into Darkness*, Mehler, an independent researcher and Egyptologist, reacquaints us with his guide, the Khemit wisdom-keeper Abd'El Hakim Awyan, whose teachings—passed down to him via an oral tradition that survived the religions of dynastic Egypt—he introduced us to in *The Land of Osiris* (see 9/01). And Mehler is keen to point out the distinction between spirituality and its offspring, religion.

The ancient Khemitian wisdom teaches that there is no time, no death, no separation, no soul and no God, but that pure spirit exists—the vibration of nothing. Its paradoxes have commonalities with other great wisdom teachings, including those of Lao Tzu (quoted here), and also with findings of quantum physics, such as those presented by physicist Fred Alan Wolf. But not only do the teachings give clues to understanding the development of the dynastic religions, they also seem to have influenced the origin of

Judaism via a link with Moses and Akhenaten (who, Mehler argues, may have been one and the same person). In addition, Mehler posits that the Rosicrucian Order inherited a mystery tradition that can be traced back at least as far as the 18th dynasty of New Kingdom Egypt.

Mehler's guide, a "staunch Afrocentrist", claims that the current full cycle of civilisation started 65,000 years ago, and Mehler has no reason to doubt the ancient wisdom is that old, if not older. In closing, he reflects on how structured systems of knowledge can lose their connection with the Light.

13-MOON DIARY OF NATURAL TIME by Nicole E. Zonderhuis and Sylvia Carrilho

Frontier Publishing, Amsterdam, 2005
ISBN 90-8067-009-X (320pp hc)
Availability: **Europe**—Frontier Publishing, **USA**—AUP; **Aust/NZ/UK**—NEXUS offices

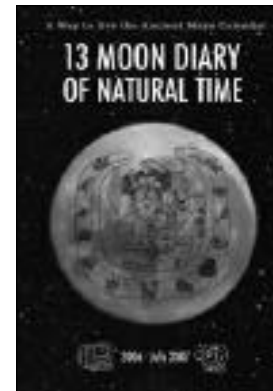
Interest in the Mayan Tzolkin calendar is growing around the world as a result of new research as well as expectations surrounding the countdown to 2012, the end date in this round of Mayan cosmology. In addition, the work of José Argüelles in creating a Dreamspell calendar, based on the 13-Moon, 28-day cycle and re-establishing the ancient Law of Time, has prompted a rethink of the irregular Gregorian calendar.

So, a new calendar requires a practical new diary, and this *13-Moon Diary of Natural Time* is a must-have for those who want to keep track of the Mayan and Gregorian systems at the same time. A quick glance at the Moonplanner shows that we're moving from the current Yellow Cosmic Seed Year to a Red Magnetic Moon Year on 26 July 2006.

The authors have reproduced the Galactic

Calendar (the Tzolkin) so you can calculate your Galactic Signature. (I've discovered that I'm a 3 Yellow Warrior, whose power is obtaining intelligence by asking questions!) You can learn to "surf" the 13-day Wavespell and discover the secret of "having more time", and tune into the 13 Tones that indicate the energy you can utilise on any given day. The diary includes key words identified with these Tones as well as with the 20 Solar Seals, both of which are explained here in detail.

The characteristics of each 28-day Moon cycle are highlighted at the start of each month throughout the diary. The layout for every week in the Gregorian calendar is in a double page spread, each day represented by the appropriate glyphs so you can see where you are according to the Tzolkin. There's an address book section, a timetable section, a place where you can record the seals and tones of your family and friends, and a list of Maya-related references. This is a beautifully presented diary which the compilers hope to keep updating as we get closer to the anticipated 2012 "End Time".



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THE SERPENT GRAIL

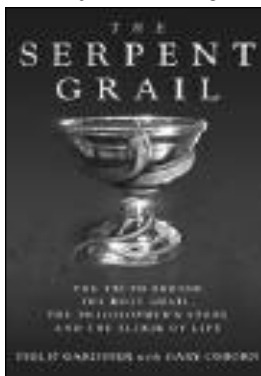
by Philip Gardiner with Gary Osborn

Watkins Publishing, London, 2005

ISBN 1-84293-129-6 (334pp tpb)

Availability: <http://www.watkinspublishing.com>; Australia—Simon & Schuster

The search for the Holy Grail takes a surprising twist in this compelling book by Philip Gardiner with Gary Osborn, a fellow researcher of mystery traditions. While the romantic tales of Arthurian legend and the fabulous stories of Middle Ages alchemical feats retain some of the original truths, much of their factual detail has become lost in allegory and metaphor over time. The intrepid authors felt they had to go further back, even beyond what historians regard as the first great civilisation, the Sumerian. What they found was a Grail heritage common to prehistoric cultures across the globe. And that heritage involved a serpent- or snake-worshipping cult that even today has resonances in the major world religions.



Their research, taking in ancient myths, alchemy, anthropology, archaeology, etymology, mysticism, religion and more, reveals secrets about a triad of mystery: the Holy Grail, steeped in the physical realm; the Elixir of Life, bound up in the mental; and the Philosopher's Stone, the attainment of the spiritual state of enlightenment—superconsciousness itself. This triad has its roots in shamanism, where mysterious potions were utilised to take the shaman to other planes of consciousness.

The medium, suggest the authors, was a mixture of snake venom and blood that in combination was not poisonous but produced intense visionary experiences and had healing properties. The snake was venerated for these qualities, and its ability to shed its skin symbolised rebirth. The ingredients were extracted using utensils such as a staff to collect the drips of venom, a knife to cut off the snake's head, a bowl (perhaps a skull cup) to collect the venom and blood, and a plate to hold the dead snake. More recent esoteric traditions symbolise these artefacts in ritual wands, swords, cups and discs

found in magickal rituals and the tarot deck.

The Serpent Grail is a challenging thesis that may force a re-examination of traditions we've perhaps taken too literally.

THE SHADOW OF SOLOMON

by Laurence Gardner

Thorsons/Element, London, 2005

ISBN 0-00-720760-3 (413pp hc)

Availability: ThorsonsElement.com

Laurence Gardner was an active Master Mason with the City of London lodge from 1966 until the mid-1980s, when he resigned due to potential conflicts with his growing career as an independent researcher (which in recent years has produced a veritable wealth of tomes from *Bloodline of the Holy Grail* to *The Magdalene Legacy*; see NEXUS 4/01 and 12/03). In the meantime he has continued his studies into the history, structure and practices of freemasonry, and now has written a comprehensive and intriguing "life" of this secretive fraternity.

Actually, many of the ancient records were lost during the days of Cromwell's rampage and in the Great Fire of London, and from his experience Gardner could see that some masonic rites had become more steeped in allegory and pageantry than fact. Records were also lost in AD 391 when the Church burnt down the Library of Alexandria, and some were found by the Knights Templars when they excavated the Jerusalem Temple vaults after the First Crusade. These treasures ended up in France and later in Scotland following the banning of the Order in the early 14th century.

In his eminently readable way, Gardner traces the ancient roots of the masonic tradition, with a particular emphasis on the Egyptian/Hebrew connection, right up to modern times. He also goes in search of ancient science and restates some of what he uncovered in *Lost Secrets of the Sacred Ark* (10/03) about the mystical, antigravitational properties of white powder gold. The Ark of the Covenant was both the means for burning pure gold to create the powder and was the receptacle; and being so heavy, it could only be transported by levitation. It was the responsibility of the Levites to undertake this task; the aprons they wore to protect themselves from the high-voltage Ark are recalled in the aprons that Masons wear to this day. Gardner believes that this "powder of projection" is at the heart of the masonic tradition, as is Royal Arch Freemasonry, which is a Chapter attached to the 3rd degree of the Craft. It has nothing to do with the ritual of Hiram Abiff but with the Royal Art: the Philosopher's Stone, levitation and enlightenment via the zero point. At last, frontier science is catching up with ancient knowledge, Gardner can report.



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CONFESSIONS OF AN ECONOMIC HIT MAN

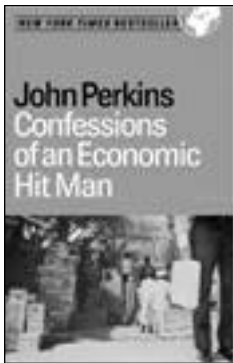
by John Perkins

Berrett-Koehler, San Francisco, 2004

ISBN 1-57675-301-8 (250pp hc)

Availability: www.bkconnection.com

When John Perkins was first recruited by the National Security Agency in 1968 for training as an "economic hit man", he had some pangs of conscience about the ethics of what he might be asked to do. So, when he finally quit his highly paid job in 1980 as a chief economist with the international consulting firm MAIN, he was wracked by guilt over the dirty tactics he'd



employed to win over strategically important countries for US government and corporate interests. He decided in 1983 to write a book exposing this high-level corruption perpetrated in the name of democracy, but four drafts and several threats and bribes later he still hadn't had it published. It was the events of 9/11 that made him realise he had to get the message out.

Now a vocal critic of the "corporatocracy" (a term he coined to describe this coalition of governments, banks and corporations) as well as an alternative energy promoter and environmental activist working to protect indigenous peoples' livelihoods, Perkins confesses to a range of sins he committed in far-flung places around the world—Ecuador, Indonesia, Saudi Arabia, Iran, Panama, Colombia. His job was to convince these countries to accept enormous loans for infrastructure development and to make sure the projects were contracted to US corporations. Once they agreed to these impossible terms, soon they were overwhelmed with debt and had to accept yet harsher dictates from foreign governments, corporations and the World Bank. When his attempts at convincing the presidents of Ecuador and Panama failed (in fact, he regarded them as like-minded friends), the CIA moved in and assassinated them. Of course, everywhere he went, the poorest people lost out along with the environment.

Some of Perkins's handiwork from this era

is still bearing fruit. In Saudi Arabia, for instance, he helped implement a covert plan that piped billions of Saudi petrodollars into the US economy and ensured a firm relationship between the Saudis and successive US administrations—although it could become unstuck, now that the Saudis have declared in the wake of hurricane Katrina that it can't increase its oil production.

Perkins has written a rivetting story that speaks volumes about our need for a world based on compassion, not power and greed.

BEYOND BELIEF – The British Bomb Tests: Australia's Veterans Speak Out by Roger Cross and Avon Hudson

Wakefield Press, South Australia, 2005

ISBN 1-86254-660-6 (208pp tpb)

Availability: www.wakefieldpress.com.au

This is an important book about the British nuclear tests conducted on Australian territory during the 1950s to early 1960s, and about their fallout on the environment and on human health. It's important because it features testimony from eyewitnesses (and there aren't many of them left, so many having died from radiation-induced diseases in the meantime), and it reminds us not to forget the British and Australian politicians, scientists and military who, in their arrogance and ignorance, allowed these travesties to be perpetrated.

Beyond Belief is a collaborative effort headed by Melbourne University senior fellow Roger Cross, author of *Fallout* (see NEXUS 8/05), and Avon Hudson, a South Australian councillor, long-time campaigner for justice for those still suffering because of the tests, and an ex-serviceman who was in Maralinga during some of the disastrous minor trials. Other contributors include Patricia Donnelly, who gathered many accounts from civilians, Doug Rickard on his discovery of cobalt-60 pellets strewn over Maralinga, Alan Parkinson on the latest clean-up of Maralinga, and Ronald Price on radiation and its effects on human health.

All the major tests are covered in separate chapters: the Monte Bello Islands off northwest WA in 1952 and 1956, Emu Field in western SA in 1953, and Maralinga in the SA desert in 1956 and 1957. The narrative is interspersed with spine-chilling reports from former defence personnel—sailors used as guineapigs in simulated nuclear war at sea scenarios, pilots forced to fly through clouds of fallout, servicemen who had to gather samples from the Maralinga crater, from owners of remote stations and local Aboriginal clans. If more Australians could become informed about the massive fallout from these nuclear tests, they would demand proper justice and compensation for the victims and their families. This is a must-read.

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DVDs

Compiled by Duncan Roads

WHAT THE BLEEP DO WE KNOW!?

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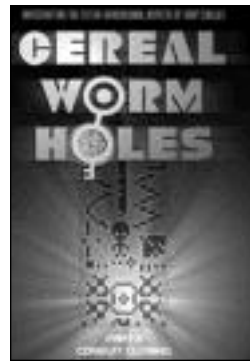
Availability: www.whatthebleep.com

This is a new type of film. It is part documentary, part story, and part elaborate and inspiring visual effects and animations. The protagonist, Amanda, played by Marlee Matlin, finds herself in a fantastic Alice in Wonderland experience when her everyday, uninspired life literally begins to unravel, revealing the uncertain world of the quantum field hidden behind what we consider to be our normal, waking reality.

As Amanda learns to relax into the experience, she conquers her fears and gains wisdom. She becomes no longer the victim of circumstances, but is on the way to being the creative force in her life. Her life will never be the same.

The 14 top scientists and mystics interviewed in this documentary-style film serve to introduce the "Great Questions" framed by both science and religion. The distinction between science and religion becomes increasingly blurred as we realise that, in essence, both science and religion describe the same phenomena.

Quirky animation, dazzling visuals, humour, precision and irreverence are only part of what makes this film unique.



THE GREAT YEAR: How much did the ancients really know?

© 2003 The Yuga Project, LLC
Availability: www.yugaproject.org

This compelling documentary, *The Great Year*, explores the possibility that the fall of ancient civilisations and the rise of modern civilisation may be related to our Sun's motion around a companion star. The film examines evidence that ancient peoples may have known of this celestial cycle and that that our Sun may indeed display the characteristics of binary motion.

This provocative film, narrated by James

Earl Jones, is written/EP'd by Walter Cruttenden, author of *Lost Star of Myth and Time* (see Book Reviews this edition). It features an interview with John Anthony West and contains 18 minutes of animation with a moving, original musical score. The filmwork, imagery and computer animations are of exceptionally high quality.

The film may be the beginning of a whole new way of looking at time and history, and may spark a new scientific movement to find our Sun's binary companion.

CEREAL WORM HOLES: Part II – Conduit Closing

© 2004 Martin Keitel Image and Media Production

Availability: www.martinkeitel.com

In 1974, a radio message was sent into outer space in a quest for communication. In 2001, a response was received, carved as a crop circle into a field in Chilbolton, southern England. But was it for real? Several experiences reveal a profound telepathic contact between human beings and an unknown intelligence. Where do these messages come from?

Before this incredible story is over, you may find that "where" is not the right question...

This film is the second by Martin Keitel, and it presents points of view and ideas not generally put forward by the "usual" crop-pies. Maybe it is the influence of researchers from countries such as Finland, Austria, Denmark and Germany that has led to a much-needed expansion of theories, including the idea of time travel.

This is not a film seeking to establish authenticity; it is a film bravely exploring the leads and experiences of people involved in this ever-growing mystery.

Join Colin Andrews, Busty Taylor, Dr Simeon Hein, Ron Russell, Paul Vigay, Lucy Pringle, Matthew Williams, Nick Nicholson, Allan Brown, Tapani Koivula, Martin Keitel, Jay Goldner, Johan Ohayv and more in this well-produced and thought-provoking journey. (Excellent visuals too!)



REVIEWS

MUSIC

Reviewed by Richard Giles

IN THE HEART OF THE MOON

by Ali Farka Touré & Toumani Diabaté

World Circuit, UK, 2005 (59mins)
Distributors: **Aust**—MRA, tel (07) 3849 6020; **UK**—World Circuit, tel (0)1689 870 622, <http://www.worldcircuit.co.uk>

Two superb African players create their own commemoration of the ancient Malian traditions in what will become a renowned CD of the early 21st century. Ali plays blues guitar and Toumani plays the *kora*, and together their blending and natural spontaneity are incomparable and astonishing, especially considering there were no rehearsals. World Circuit has done us a big favour by bringing them together.

THE VERY BEST OF NORTH AFRICA

by various artists

Nascente, UK, 2005 (2CDs, 126mins)
Distributors: **Aust**—MRA Entertainment, tel (07) 3849 6020; **UK**—Nascente Music, tel 020 7612 3300, website <http://www.demonmusicgroup.co.uk>

A thorough collection of North Africa's musicians featuring contemporary sub-Saharan music artists, many of whom have come onto the world stage and perform to sell-out audiences. You'll find names such as Khaled, Amr Diab, Rachid Taha, Souad Massi, Orchestra National de Barbes, Hamid el Gnawi, Ali Hassan Kuban, Natacha Atlas and many others, together on an album that is an exciting treasure trove of the very best North African music.

SLEEPING LOTUS

by Li Xiangting

Real Music, USA, 2005 (60mins)
Distributors: **Aust**—New World Music, tel (02) 9565 4522; **Europe**—MCC, tel +49 4102 898202; **USA**—Real Music Records, tel (303) 415 1040, website <http://www.realmusic.com>

Professor Li Xiangting is acknowledged as the most important of the modern *guqin* players of the Chinese tradition. The *guqin* is a seven-stringed zither-like instrument that can generate over 100 harmonics and its history goes back over 3,000 years. By the middle of the 20th century, the *guqin* had become almost lost, but since then Professor Li has revived it. The other instrument he shares on the album is the *xiao*, a vertical bamboo flute. Li has rescued the lost art and is one of the very few people to improvise on the *guqin*, and certainly the only master player to do so. Ancient and serene music for relaxation.

LA KAHENA

by Cheb i Sabbah

Six Degrees, USA, 2005 (66mins)
Distributors: **Aust**—MRA; **USA**—Six Degrees Records, tel (415) 626 6334, <http://www.sixdegreesrecords.com>

Centuries of Arab music is captured on this Six Degrees album by Algerian-born Cheb i Sabbah, an *avant garde* modern music emissary who was originally a DJ. The eight songs on *La Kahena* feature different female vocalists and music from various regions. The CD is named after a legendary 7th century Algerian freedom-fighter who was both Berber and Jew, as is Sabbah. La Kahena fiercely commanded Berber armies against invading Arab warriors. Sabbah takes the recordings and adds everything from Bill Laswell's jazz bass and techno drum-machine beats to children's sounds and a host of instruments to make something one can meditate, dance and even pray to. A fantastic, stimulating, genuine mix.

MALI

by various artists

Putumayo, USA, 2005 (50mins)
Distributors: **Aust**—MRA; **UK**—Putumayo, tel 07759 600495; **USA**—Putumayo World Music, tel 800 955 9588, <http://www.putumayo.com>

Mali has one of the great musical lines of Africa, and many tribes have preserved and evolved their musical traditions over the centuries. Putumayo's *Mali* collection presents the *griots* with their troubadour heritage, the Touaregs with their desert blues, the powerful vocals of the *wassoulou* musicians from the south, and the soulful Bambara hunter's music. Featured instruments are the *kora* (harp), *n'goni* (small guitar), *balafón* (xylophone) and *tamana* (talking drum). Artists include Issa Bagayogo, Moussa Diallo, Tom Diakité, Habib Koité, Mamou Sidibé and Idrissa Soumaoro. According to Jacob Edgar of Putumayo, Mali will be the next Cuba! Grab this CD!

